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Editor's Introduction

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Editor's Introduction: Vol 5 Issue 2 (Fall 2009)

Like the various Renaissances, from Italy's to Harlem's and beyond, the current period at UNI and UNIVersitas is one of transition. And like the people of the various Renaissances, we enjoy emulating the adept chameleon amid changing conditions, as Pico imagines in his "Oration on the Dignity of Man," while we conscientiously and purposefully contribute to the production of progressively more humane conditions, however futile or painful the contributions may feel, as Countee Cullen celebrates in his sonnet, "Yet Do I Marvel."

UNIVersitas has always embraced such transitional moments and agile, resourceful people. Indeed, from its inception, UNIVersitas has been keen to draw on as much erudition as possible, while not neglecting to address real and imagined quotidian problems. This is what the founding editor and editorial board intended, in naming the journal. The name connects the journal both to its everyday home as well as to its rich yet arcane intellectual, historical and literary heritage, a heritage which you and I can trace back through the Middle Ages to the great philosopher and champion of his republic, Cicero.

Developing further the rich tradition of UNIVersitas, this issue advances the movement from the modernist and disciplinary fantasy of singular production into the more materially substantiated and ethically rewarding recognition of collaboration. This issue does so by concentrating attention on topics, events, exchanges, and then listing some of the major contributors to the elaboration of those topics, events, exchanges. Nothing in this issue of UNIVersitas has been produced by one person, without significant reference to and even dependence upon others. This editor's introduction, for instance, is by its nature dependent upon previous editors and current contributors. All the contributions to this issue of UNIVersitas are similarly collaborations of varying kinds, and we try to indicate the nature of the collaborations throughout the journal.

In the [*Provost Colloquium on Interdisciplinarity*](#), several talented and generally interesting UNI faculty members explore the possibilities for UNI's participation in contemporary advancements in global knowledge and intellectual activity. While tightly and elaborately rooted in the twentieth-century past, UNI also seems to be poised to cultivate areas of unprecedented vigor and grace, if good responses to certain challenges can be embraced.

Exploring the differences between forms of interdisciplinary intellectual work, [*An Interdisciplinary Consideration of Marginality*](#) engages the international conceptualization of the poor and the gendered. In its style as much as in its contentions, *An Interdisciplinary Consideration of Marginality* performs as much as expresses one of the more vibrant of the contemporary modes of interdisciplinarity.



Massively collaborative, the contribution from the College of Humanities and Fine Arts, [*Celebrating Excellence in Traditional Research in the Humanities: Selections from the Third Annual College of Humanities and Fine Arts Graduate Research Symposium*](#), brings interdisciplinarity to our students as it also represents another mode that interdisciplinarity takes, a mode especially well suited to the medium in which it is published, electronically re/produced digitization. The appropriateness of representing such collaborations in a digital medium is especially appreciated when contrasted to the medium out of which it evolved, mechanically reproduced print.

Finally, this issue offers some links and references to topics, events, and exchanges that have some more or less oblique relation to the topics, events, and exchanges explored in the main body of this issue of UNiVersitas. We call these oblique references Tangents, to suggest the interdisciplinary way we think of the matter of the page.

In each of the parts of the journal, there is the opportunity for readers and spectators to blog. Please do consider contributing in this way to the always already collaborative thoughts. Thanks for reading, and thanks very much to all those who have already contributed to the publication of this issue.

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